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In a community confrontation progr[illegible] with police and community members, group leaders face many problems dissimilar from those found in group therapy. Dealing with authority (police) was difficult when the leader held a low self-esteem. Dealing with very vocal, rebellious community members presented difficulties in accepting their reports as truth and not fantasy. Group maintenance was a problem since the leader had no control over group membership or community attendance. Neither group (police or community) trusted the leader. Police had to drop their defensiveness and community members had to learn to accept police as human beings before progress could be made. The varied goals of the members had to be considered. With no practical goals in common, the leader had difficulty designing a tactical plan for these confrontations. Suggestions for developing group humor are given. The leader's awareness of community politics, resources, and history is helpful if he is to be a group catalyst in a short period of time. References are included in this report. (KJ)

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ANXIETIES OF GROUP LEADERS IN POLICE-COMMUNITY CONFRONTATIONS

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We believe that the social sciences have a tremendous potentiality for assisting in the solution of destructive social reactions to the problems of existence. Before this potentiality is fully realized we may be faced with many challenges through which our patterns of attitudes, interests, and training may be painfully re-evaluated. This paper deals primarily with the problems of leadership in a community confrontation program in which mutually antagonistic people faced each other. The anxieties of the group leaders, expected in such unfamiliar uncomfortable situations, are discussed under the headings of personal, professional, and cultural lags, lack of group cohesion, and poorly conceptualized program goals.

Personal, Professional, and Cultural Inadequacies

Our premise is that the locus of anxiety lies in the attitudes of the person shown by his demands upon himself and others. Years ago Sanford (6) mentioned the uneasy diffidence of psychologists as a factor precluding our involvement in novel social movements. Many psychologists, he maintained, had made large socio-economic leaps from lower classes and had not learned to see themselves as capable persons in their new roles. This perceptual defect may have strengthened our desires for the certainties inherent in precise measurement of socially neutral issues, and may have contributed to chronic problems in dealing with authority. The combination of an individual

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with insufficient personal worth working in an emerging profession with its own identity problems lends itself to such defensive power struggles. One cannot minimize the fear of frustrating encounters that is experienced in times of low self-esteem when one demands to be confirmed by others.

Flight or fight engagements with authority were quite apparent in the beginning of the Houston program. With some leaders the conflict became incorporated into his goals of "exposing police (but not community) prejudices"; with others the problem abated when the police became more relaxed and open. Nevertheless the authority problem was crucial and accepted as such by leaders who often worked out such issues in weekly meetings of group leaders.

The phrase, "The Dark Ages of Quietment," seems descriptive of the subtle cultural equating of docile obedience with mental health (yet ignoring passively violent reactions). All too often we choose the quiet unobtrusive person as the prime example of mental health (2). So for the most part we are not yet fully equipped personally, professionally, or culturally for dealing with groups that yell and scream at each other; and live in the real world where their reports are accepted as newsworthy facts and not discounted as fantasies of patients.

Problems of Group Maintenance

In traditional group psychotherapy the psychotherapist is initially a focal point of attention either because of transference factors or institutional power structures. This was seldom so in the police-community confrontations. The leader never selected his group members and had no control over community attendance. Although he lacked immediate gratuitous attention as

both groups quickly sought to derogate the other, the leader soon discovered that basically neither group trusted him. To the police he was a meddling "Fed brain bender" while to the citizens he was often seen as a status quo lackey, hired to whitewash police practices and hide real issues. Most of the leaders had no difficulty in finding instances of subtle attempts to sabotage the program. These were more noticeable among the police who were forced to attend and give up moonlighting and recreational activities. Late arrivals and early departures and all forms of violent passivities and sudden vocal acting-outs were prominent. News media and community leaders, ignoring the leaders, arrived at their autistic ideas of group methods and goals and compounded the confusions and anxieties of police, citizens, and leaders alike.

Two situations led to the most apparent danger for the program: the failure of some community members to abide by their commitment to attend for six weeks. These were, first, the absence of positive factors which would lead to the rapid establishment of leader-group attractions; and, secondly, the community habit of hit-and-run encounters. In the latter ploy one loudly shouts down possible reactions while telling-it-like-it-is, then leaves the group with self-righteous wrath if the accusations are not cheerfully accepted. In this atmosphere of distrust, community members searching for reasons to hate police could find ample evidence if they attended only the early meetings, for it was not until the police dropped their defensive derogations and talked of their problems that the citizens accepted them as possibly human.

Generally leaders learned that they had to earn respect by living up to their principles of listening and avoiding defensive behavior. Their strategy was to keep the group intact long enough for the members to look at their prejudices and to develop positive feelings for problems of others. Methods for keeping the group task-oriented varied with the leader, but usually included bringing into the open hidden attitudes and goals; protecting each person's right to dialogue by humorously interrupting filibusters; and showing the manner in which one could gather fuel for hatred if that were his purpose for attending.

In our institutional work our psychodynamic systems give us confidence that we understand the pathologies of the patient. In community confrontation work we are lacking classifications of political psychopathologies, thereby lessening leader confidence. Certainly many of the basic premises of the political extremes could be examined for their magical-egotistical power goals and blended into the leaders' interpretations. For example, we have the extreme left, with faith that redistribution of material assets will automatically solve our needs for love and hope. At the other end the right winger perceives man as ideally isolated, and deludes himself that he is psychologically independent and has lifted himself by his own homemade bootstraps. One of the latest dis - eases for the group leaders was the arrival of members of the Birch Society "to support their local police." To their way of thinking the sensitivity programs are Communist-inspired ways of isolating the individual. The participant is seen by them as a helpless pawn in spite of their paradoxical extolling the power of the "individual." According to Allen writing in American Opinion (1), stern morality fails when the

individual succumbs to confessions, then sex and drugs follow as the participant becomes a progressively more powerless victim of the leader who "probes for raw nerves and then starts drilling" (p. 81). "You see, with Sensitivity Training the individual with high morals and integrity must be cut down to the level of the rest of the group" (p. 83). In defense of our leaders it may be said that their concern was to help transform "high morality" from an isolated religiosity serving magical-egotistical goals into a democratic morality in which "he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (Romans 14:8). At the present time coping with the demands of extremists, militants, and John Birch members may prove to be better training for the community therapist than any academic course now available.

Uncertain Goals

In addition to impotence in selection of groups and adequate time for developing relationships, confrontation leaders are likely to be faced with diverse goals from a welter of publicity media and unauthorized spokesmen. This is another instance of the authority problem which hopefully can be resolved in a socially helpful way. If the leader dissociates himself from exclusive identification with either the police or citizens in order to see the problem from a larger social context, the solution will be easier. Extremist and militant perspectives, taken separately, are too oversimplified and narrow to offer lasting solutions to social ills. Pressures from such spokesmen are crucial only if the leader is still enslaved by his own demands for the approval of authority figures.

Lacking stable program goals the leaders also had no practical experience

with an overall tactical design for the confrontations. An example of one methodology follows. Perhaps it can be said that the goals of the Action Therapy confrontations (4,5) is to assist in the growth of participants' sense of humor by the following steps:

Encourage all members to present images of their reference group together with images of the other group;

Provide opportunities for participants to observe the manner in which expressed feelings, hopes, and fears of one group are simply negated or ignored by the other group;

Explcre the need of each group to have the other see them in a certain way and the subsequent frustration when these often unconscious urges are not automatically gratified;

Demonstrate the failure of prejudiced members to engage in problem-solving social alternatives by their chronic search for self-esteem through depreciation of the other group.

Humor, it seems, grows in those who have a strong feeling of personal worth without undue demands that others behave toward them in a prescribed manner (3). That is what groups in chronic conflict do not possess, but can apparently develop if they stop blaming self and others and practice hopeful mutual problem solving. In this democratic process of cooperation-as-equals listening as well as talking is paramount. In our case participants were told to listen for human feelings in others rather than dehumanize and hate them. Specifically the leader often asked "How does he feel?" "Do you believe he could feel that way?" "Is there any way this person could ever convince

you that he feels that way?" These questions were appropriate when police or community through verbal and non-verbal actions stopped listening in their efforts to tell the other how wrong he was or to rationalize their own supposedly objectionable behavior.

An example of the active role of the leader in blocking the practice of prejudice in both groups is the following incident which occurred in one session. At the beginning of the meeting the police members of the group constantly answered community feelings of police neglect and disrespect by silence, smiles, and attempts to attribute immorality and criminality to the complainer. Through self-disclosure the leader ventilated his own feelings of hopelessness so long as the police lacked the social courage to cooperate. By the psychodramatic techniques of mirroring and doubling (4,5) possible police motives of power and revenge were explored, and the police began to relate to citizens as equals on the feeling level. One hour later the leader had to silence community members who suddenly dropped in to loudly and rapidly recite police indignities, drowning out police responses and ignoring the fact that the officers were relating authentically to the citizens at that time. A useful device was to interrupt the interlopers with "Please tell the police something that will help them now." At this time the young activists reacted negatively to the idea of helping the police and departed, but at other times they listened.

Although the leader may have had in mind the goals of increasing the self-esteem of participants as non-defensive human beings, he may have had some doubt as to whether such a psychological lift to key participants might

be defeating social goals of greater esteem from more people. In other words, does the successful leader prevent disruptive demonstrations which might in time have beneficial results for a greater number of socially disenfranchised people? History is already telling us that riots in our times result in greater immediate recognition than non-obstrusive protests, with relatively little personal risk of punishment.

Summary

As the traditionally trained clinical psychologist's radius of social action increases, he finds himself without the protection of comforting dogmas and maxims. These include the orthodox medical model with its voluntary or captive patient, the "magical healer" delusion, control of group composition and time, and the often-welcomed isolation from public opinion through the intervention of fences, locks, labels, pills, and needles. In his new community role the leader faces considerable criticism from participants and power figures who make decisions which affect his life in the real non-hospital world. The leader's awareness of community politics, resources, and history is helpful if he is to be a group catalyst in a short period of time. To avoid defensive behavior a knowledge of the premises, attitudes, and goals of the political extremists is helpful to the leader but not as important as understanding his own reactions to authority, poverty, and the uses of violent force.

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